

MANSFIELD HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
June 14, 2005

Members attending: I. Atwood, G. Bruhn, H. Marshall, J. Newmyer, D. Spencer

The minutes of the May 10 meeting were approved with one correction: change the words "conference room" to "foyer."

PUBLIC HEARING: Members of the First Baptist Church of Mansfield appeared to present information on re-roofing the bell tower and front entry of this building.

John Riesen, 42 Farmstead Rd., presented the following statement:

"Hi, My name is John Riesen and I have lived at 42 Farmstead road in Storrs for over 30 years. I am a long time member of the First Baptist Church of Mansfield and am currently a member of the Board of Trustees.

1. The Church is proud of its building. Dedicated in 1875 the First Baptist Church of Mansfield building is of historic significance and the Church members very much wish to preserve the building and its character.
2. We feel that the best way to do this is to put asphalt architectural shingles on the roof of the bell tower and foyer. (Not the conference room as indicated in the newspaper announcement of this meeting.)
3. The Church building has had several additions over the years and consequently has several roof sections. These are: 1) the wood shingle roof covering the sanctuary (parallel to route 195), 2) the small wood shingle roof sections covering the bell tower and foyer (at right angles to route 195 and the subject of this proposal), 3) the wood shingle roof covering the conference room (parallel to route 195 and the most recent addition), 4) the standard asphalt shingle roof covering the Christian Education wing and 5) the standard asphalt shingle roof covering the outbuilding. Over the years, the church has not felt the need or had the funds to re-roof the entire structure at one time. Because cedar shingles change color with age during the first several years, this has resulted in a patch work of different color roofs on the church due to the different age wood shingles. Architectural shingles, on the other hand, do not significantly change color with age and would allow us to maintain a more uniform appearance to the building.
4. Architectural shingles have improved significantly in quality and appearance over the last several years. They come in a variety of colors that would blend with the existing cedar shingle roofs. We feel that the use of architectural shingles would preserve the character of the building as viewed from the road. While we realize that each Historic District Commission is autonomous, there is precedent for replacing wood shingles with architectural shingles indicating that others also feel the character of historic buildings can be maintained using architectural shingles. Near by the Jedidiah Elderkin house in Windham Center built in 1705 and part of a historic district was allowed to re-roof using architectural shingles.

5. It is getting more and more difficult to find someone skilled in installing wood shingles. In addition, getting good quality cedar shingles has also become more difficult..
6. While the roofs in question should be repaired soon, time would be required to raise the money for wooden shingles, exposing the structure to risk of water damage. However, a donor has come forward willing to pay for architectural shingles and the repairs could be started shortly after we receive permission to use architectural asphalt shingles from the Commission. This donor feels that there are clear long term advantages of architectural shingles in preserving our building and is not willing to contribute to cedar shingles.
7. Since the asphalt architectural shingles would preserve the character of the building, are more fire resistant than wood, currently last at least as long (30-50 years) and do not change color, we feel the building and its heritage would be best protected by installing asphalt architectural shingles.

For the above reasons, I ask the commission to favorably act on the request of the First Baptist Church of Mansfield to re-roof the bell tower and foyer with high quality architectural shingles in an appropriate color to match the existing aged cedar shingle roofs. Thank you.”

William McMunn, 62 North Rd, Windham Center, active in the First Baptist Church for 35 years, Chair of the Historic District Commission of Windham, urges the Commission to deny this request. The historic significance of the building will be diminished unless cedar shingles are used in re-roofing. Insurance companies consider wood and asphalt shingles equally fireproof.

Meredith McMunn has explored the possibility of grants to assist in the re-roofing but finds that religious buildings are excluded.

Nancy Flynn, 23 Phillip Dr., Storrs, pointed out that the church has a small congregation of about 100 with little money; in fact they are having trouble meeting the current budget.

Prescott Spencer noted that a donor has agreed to cover the cost of asphalt shingles. The 3-year-old cedar roof on the addition is already failing; he urged Commission members to come to the church to see for themselves.

Tom Lackman pointed out that the variety of colors on the roof now are detrimental to its appearance; he also believes asphalt shingles are more durable than cedar. Wood shingles are out of date.

Sam Shepardson, member of the church for 48 years, noted that people who donate to a special fund (such as re-roofing) reduce their pledges. Water damage is already occurring and the roof needs to be done soon.

Meredith Lindsay is concerned that the church's purpose and mission will be diminished for lack of funding if the roof has to be paid for by fundraising rather than by a donor.

Roy Moore urged that the application for asphalt shingles be approved.

The hearing was closed.

The Commission agreed to examine the roofing of the First Baptist Church and to hold a special meeting on July 12 to address the request for a certificate of appropriateness.

WOODS COMMUNITY

Natalie Miniutti presented information on the Woods Community, Browns Rd., Storrs. Some alterations were made to the design of the house on lot #1: the windows are now all 6 over 6, the kitchen has been moved to the back of the house. Questions were raised about the garage doors at the front of the house, though some felt that was fine. A hearing will be called for July 12 to address the request for a certificate of appropriateness for the lot #1 residence of the "Woods" Community on Browns Rd. within the Mansfield Center Historic District.

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody Newmyer
Clerk